UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
69th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 29 June 1994
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 69th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

Report of the Secretary-General on the reorganization of the Department of Administration and Management

Report of the Secretary-General on the proposed reclassification of posts

Report of the Secretary-General on the staffing and functions of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the Centre for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General on the continued United Nations human rights presence in Cambodia

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations special coordinator in the occupied territories

AGENDA ITEM 138: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of the publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/48/SR.69
28 September 1994
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

94-81047 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

Report of the Secretary-General on the reorganization of the Department of Administration and Management (A/C.5/48/72 and A/48/7/Add.13)

Report of the Secretary-General on the proposed reclassification of posts (A/C.5/48/75 and A/48/7/Add.11)

Report of the Secretary-General on the staffing and functions of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the Centre for Human Rights (A/C.5/48/77 and A/48/7/Add.10)

Report of the Secretary-General on the continued United Nations human rights presence in Cambodia (A/C.5/48/78 and A/48/7/Add.12)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations special coordinator in the occupied territories (A/C.5/48/81)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on the reorganization of the Department of Administration and Management (A/C.5/48/72), said that the Advisory Committee welcomed the proposals contained in the report, while having the reservations expressed in the related report of ACABQ (A/48/7/Add.13). He noted that due account had been taken of the prior views of the Secretary-General and the reactions thereto of the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly. What was an essential department had undergone too many changes in recent years, and the time had come to endow it with a degree of stability. He trusted that, as a result of the proposals, staff would be able to concentrate on the substantive issues for which they had responsibility. He drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 9 of the Advisory Committee's report, where ACABQ recommended that, in view of discussions now ongoing in the Fifth Committee regarding the inspection and investigation function, no action should be taken regarding the assistant secretary-general post, and to paragraph 10, in which ACABQ indicated that it would keep the question of the redeployment of two D-2 posts to the Department of Administration and Management under review in the context of its consideration of the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997.

2. The Advisory Committee, in its report on the proposed reclassifications of posts (A/48/7/Add.11), was recommending acceptance of the reclassifications proposed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/48/75). It had not been easy to reach such a conclusion. Over the years the Advisory Committee had encountered many difficulties in considering proposals for the reclassification of posts submitted to it. There was a need to simplify the procedure for the submission of such proposals by the Secretary-General to the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly. He drew the attention of the Fifth Committee to the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General, pursuant to General Assembly

resolution 48/218, of 23 December 1993. The High Commissioner had requested that the Secretary-General should indicate his views on the viability and consequences of his being granted authority to reclassify posts up to the P-5 level, taking into account the objectives indicated in paragraph 8 of the Advisory Committee's report, namely to ensure that the relationship between the overall numbers for each grade level was maintained.

3. In reviewing the report of the Secretary-General on the staffing and functions of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the Centre for Human Rights (A/C.5/48/77), the Advisory Committee had encountered some difficulty - in particular, over the absence of any clear indication of the organizational relationship between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Centre. Doubtless that information would be available in due course, when the High Commissioner had concluded his review of the requirements of his Office and the Secretary-General had submitted a report thereon. The Advisory Committee, in its report (A/48/7/Add.10), drew attention to other issues that, if resolved, would result in the optimum use of the resources allocated.

4. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on a continued United Nations human rights presence in Cambodia (A/C.5/48/78), should the Advisory Committee's recommendation in paragraph 11 of its report (A/48/7/Add.12) for approval of an amount of $1.5 million (inclusive of the $550,000 already approved) for the financing of human rights activities in Cambodia be accepted, any appropriation would be considered in the context of the first performance report for the biennium 1994-1995.

5. The Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (A/C.5/48/81) had been submitted in response to the request contained in paragraph 5 of the relevant report of the Advisory Committee (A/48/920). In that report the Advisory Committee had recommended that commitments of $1,441,200 should be authorized initially under section 4 of the programme budget for 1994-1995 in connection with the establishment of four temporary posts (one assistant secretary-general, one D-1, one P-5 and one General Service post). The Advisory Committee had not had sufficient time to consider the report of the Secretary-General in depth, owing to its late submission. Nevertheless, in view of the conclusion reached by the Secretary-General in paragraph 6 of his report, as well as the views expressed by some Member States during the Committee's consideration of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/48/920), ACABQ was recommending to the General Assembly that it should approve the Secretary-General's request that the post of Special Coordinator shall be at the under-secretary-general level.

6. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that, since document A/C.5/48/81 had only been distributed at the current meeting, his delegation had had no opportunity to study it, nor to refer it to Washington for instructions. It was possible that some delegations had proposed that the post of United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories should be at the under-secretary-general level (para. 6), but he was not sure that the Fifth Committee had taken such a decision. In any event, if the Committee was being requested

(Mr. Michalski, United States)

to approve the under-secretary-general level for the Special Coordinator, his delegation was not prepared to take any decision on the matter. Moreover, if the Fifth Committee was to be treated in such a way, receiving documents requesting reclassification of posts to a higher level only at the last moment, his delegation found itself obliged to reiterate its view that the role of the Fifth Committee and the Member States in the budgetary process was continually being diminished. In view of the fact that the Organization must be governed by established standards and that Member States had other responsibilities besides paying the bills, his delegation was opposed to the procedures being followed in the current instance and in connection with other agenda items. His statement was not politically motivated, but was strictly in response to the constant abuses of the procedures on the part of the Secretariat and the regrettable way in which Member States were treated in the Committee. Although his delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal in principle, it did not wish to be forced into approving it without having had an opportunity for prior consultation with Washington.

7. Mr. ZEVELAKIS (Greece), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the report of the Secretary-General on the staffing and functions of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights (A/C.5/48/77) contained much important and useful information on the requirements of the High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights. In paragraph 9 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/48/7/Add.10) and in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General, reference was made to the Liaison Office in New York. He would welcome more information on the situation with regard to that Office.

8. Mr. ROSENBERG (Ecuador) shared the view of the Advisory Committee with regard to the need to clarify the organizational relationship between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights. However, he regretted that so far it had not been possible to provide the High Commissioner with the resources allocated to him to fulfil his important and sensitive functions, resources which were quite meagre considering the magnitude of the task. Everyone had been given an opportunity to see the High Commissioner in action in Rwanda, a crisis which had been unleashed barely a day after he had taken up his functions. Undoubtedly that problem had occupied his attention, and perhaps explained why he was still preparing the reports to be submitted regarding the organization of his office. If the High Commissioner was to proceed with the difficult task which had been entrusted to him, it was essential that he should be given the necessary support, resources and staff to fulfil his mandate. His delegation therefore hoped that those resources would be allocated quickly.

9. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) endorsed the comments of the representative of Ecuador regarding the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It was well known that, in the Third Committee, delicate political negotiations had taken place during which the functions of the High Commissioner which had been defined, with the clear support of all Member States. It would therefore be highly regrettable if the necessary resources were not allocated for the fulfilment of the mandates entrusted to him by the Third Committee. In its report

(Mr. Clavijo, Colombia)

(A/48/7/Add.10), the Advisory Committee drew attention to various gaps in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/48/77), particularly regarding the clear separation of functions between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights. Although certain aspects should be clarified from a technical standpoint, his delegation hoped that that would not lead to the freezing of the functions of the High Commissioner. It also hoped that it would be possible to obtain the information requested by the Advisory Committee during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, so that, even on a provisional basis, the resources necessary for the High Commissioner to initiate his activities could be allocated to him.

10. Mr. KUMAMARU (Japan) said that the Secretary-General's proposals on the reorganization of the Department of Administration and Management (A/C.5/48/72) were very interesting, not only from the standpoint of the programme budget, but also because of the changes they would lead to in the work of that Department. His delegation welcomed the initiative taken by the Secretariat and the new Under-Secretary-General with a view to increasing the efficiency of the Department, but it would have preferred the Advisory Committee to focus its attention not only on the budgetary aspects, but also on the reorganization itself. The proposal was a very broad one and would have strong repercussions on the Department's activities and administrative structure; it should therefore be considered in greater detail by the Fifth Committee. It would be useful to have more information and for delegations to have an opportunity to express their views on the proposal.

11. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) regretted that at the current late stage, when more than six months had elapsed since the question of the regular budget should have been resolved, the Advisory Committee was still not in a position to recommend final decisions to the Fifth Committee. From reading the reports of the Advisory Committee, it could be clearly seen that the major gaps in the reports of the Secretary-General would prevent the Advisory Committee from recommending firm conclusions and would cause it to request more information. His delegation believed that the Fifth Committee could not postpone indefinitely the adoption of decisions that were required to facilitate the functioning of the Secretariat operations and the execution of programmes already approved by the General Assembly, some of them six or nine months earlier. He was especially concerned by the uncertainties which would still surround the work of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights if the Fifth Committee simply endorsed the report of the Advisory Committee.

12. His delegation shared the views of the representative of the United States concerning document A/C.5/48/81, and was not clear what decisions the General Assembly should adopt on the matter. It was rather strange that the reclassification of a post to a higher level had been proposed without any indication of the cost of the reclassification; he requested the relevant information.

13. Ms. LIMJUCO (Philippines) recalled the great satisfaction with which the Third Committee had welcomed the consensus on the establishment of the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights. The establishment of a high-level and permanent mechanism for the promotion and protection of human rights, with the authority to coordinate all human rights activities and with a prevention mandate that would permit him to avert human rights violations, had finally been achieved. That element of preventive diplomacy represented a major step forward compared to the former modus operandi, which had been directed towards resolving crises. It was therefore discouraging and disturbing that for procedural or other reasons, the High Commissioner had not immediately been given the necessary support to function in accordance with his mandate. It was more essential than ever to have a High Commissioner who could react immediately to violations of human rights and who had mobility and the necessary logistical support and staff to discharge his functions. Her delegation had no objection whatsoever to the comments of the Advisory Committee in its report regarding the need to avoid duplication of functions. However, it had long since been explained that the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights would be a single entity dedicated to the promotion and protection of Human Rights. Action had been initiated in the Third Committee with a view to strengthening the Centre as well as the New York Office, which was part of the Centre and which had been of great assistance to delegations in the deliberations on human rights. Her delegation welcomed the statement by the Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/48/77, para. 4) that, in the meantime he would ensure that the High Commissioner had at his disposal the resources necessary to enable him to discharge his functions.

14. Mr. TROTTIER (Canada), referring to the report of the Advisory Committee on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights (A/48/7/Add.10), expressed his delegation's support for augmenting the resources for the human rights programme. Given that the expenditure for that programme constituted a minuscule part of the United Nations general programme budget, and bearing in mind the importance of the adequate functioning of the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, he concurred with the Ecuadorian and Colombian delegations that it was indispensable for the High Commissioner to be able to count on having sufficient resources and personnel. Although the information requested from the Centre for Human Rights by the Advisory Committee would doubtless be useful, that legitimate request should not interfere with the provision to the High Commissioner, as soon as possible, of the means necessary for the fulfilment of his task. His delegation doubted that the resources mentioned in paragraph 2 of the report would be adequate for that purpose.

15. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) expressed the hope that the cause of human rights would not become the victim of internal power struggles that would give rise to a parallel bureaucracy in the Office of the High Commissioner. He also hoped that the resources, limited as they were by all the other activities of the United Nations, would be used efficiently and prudently, and would not wind up being diverted to resolve the bureaucratic problems of the Secretariat. His delegation supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee in that respect.

(Mr. Michalski, United States)

16. With regard to the Secretary-General's proposals for reclassification of posts (document A/C.5/48/75), his delegation had reservations and would explore the question during the informal consultations. In general, it felt that programme managers should pay more attention to the discussions of the Fifth Committee, which frequently found no justification for such proposals. Using clever language, the Secretariat was trying to convince the Fifth Committee that the proposals were justified by alluding to the growing complexity of the tasks and broader scope of the activities of the United Nations, and by exaggerating the role of those activities in numerous spheres; nevertheless, those general claims were not supported by concrete details.

17. With regard to the reorganization of the Department of Administration and Management, his delegation supported the proposal of the Secretary-General, and in particular the Advisory Committee's recommendation in paragraph 9 of its report (A/48/7/Add. 13) that no action should be taken on the proposal concerning the Chief of the Office for Inspections and Investigations until the conclusion of ongoing discussions in the Fifth Committee regarding the establishment of a new function in that sphere.

18. Finally, he noted that certain proposals required clarification, such as those contained in the reports of the Secretary-General on ONUMOZ (A/48/849/Add.1) and on the support account for peace-keeping operations (A/48/470 and Add.1), and the corresponding reports of the Advisory Committee (A/48/956 and A/48/955, respectively), since they involved considerable resources and questions of principle. It was not his wish to cause delays or complications, but delegations had to answer to their Governments. Accordingly, when those questions were examined, the United States would not be able to go on record as supporting the Advisory Committee's recommendations in the absence of the Chairman of that Committee. His delegation was still studying, inter alia, the just-published report on the Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (A/C.5/48/81); the Secretariat should give adequate time for Member States to debate and consider those questions.

19. Mrs. RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) concurred with the Ecuadorian delegation, among others, that the High Commissioner for Human Rights did not have sufficient resources to carry out his tasks. During the forty-eighth session, the Fifth Committee should assign to him the resources that he needed to perform the task entrusted to him by the General Assembly.

20. Mr. MORCZYNSKI (Poland) concurred with the previous delegations in regard to resources for the Office of the High Commissioner. He called on the Fifth Committee to allocate the necessary resources for the High Commissioner, even if they were provisional in nature; the issues raised by the Advisory Committee could be cleared up later.

21. Mr. SHARP (Australia) said that during the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 the international community had declared at the highest political level that more resources had to be committed for the promotion and protection of human rights in the United Nations system, and had requested in particular that the General Assembly should take action to that end. Also in 1993, the General

(Mr. Sharp, Australia)

Assembly had decided to establish the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights. He was glad so see that consensus existed on the High Commissioner's need for sufficient resources to carry out his work effectively. His delegation agreed that the relationship between the High Commissioner and the Director of the Centre for Human Rights should be clarified, but, like other delegations, hoped that the debates on that question would not delay the allocation of resources for the High Commissioner.

22. Ms. LAHNALAMPI (Finland), referring to the question of the Centre for Human Rights and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, reiterated that her country supported increasing resources for the promotion and protection of human rights. She shared the concern of the Advisory Committee regarding coordination and duplication of activities, and regarding the possibility of a larger bureaucracy, but she also welcomed the consensus on allocating the agreed resources to the High Commissioner. If the hiring of permanent staff for the High Commissioner were to be restricted, he would have to hire consultants for short periods, which could damage efficiency over the long term. Her delegation therefore requested that the Advisory Committee should be provided as soon as possible with the information it needed to make a final decision on resources in good time; it was not appropriate, as the United Kingdom delegation had said, to continue delaying those questions until the following session of the General Assembly.

23. Mr. VARELA (Chile) said that the reports of the Advisory Committee were indispensable for the work of the Fifth Committee, for they were based on technical reviews that aided decision-making. He considered the activities of the Centre and of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to be of the utmost importance, and he was therefore worried that their work might be compromised by the lack of adequate staffing. He joined the delegations that had preceded him in requesting that the necessary measures should be taken to provide more resources to the High Commissioner.

24. Mr. DEKANY (Hungary) said that for 40 years the United Nations had been trying to establish the Office of the High Commissioner. Following the World Conference on Human Rights, the General Assembly had finally decided by consensus, to establish it in its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993. Member States that adopted decisions in the political bodies had a certain responsibility for implementing those decisions. That was particularly pertinent in the case of the human rights programme, to which clearly insufficient funds had been allocated, and of the establishment of the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights. While sharing the concern expressed by the Advisory Committee regarding the duplication of activities and the growth of bureaucracy, his delegation considered that from the political point of view the establishment of an independent office and the appointment of an independent official were justified, since that was in response to the unanimous wish of Member States to create a distinct mechanism for the promotion and protection of human rights. In common with earlier speakers, he felt that there should be no further delay in the allocation of resources to enable the Office of the High Commissioner to begin functioning effectively.

25. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal) stressed the importance of the Advisory Committee being present when the Fifth Committee considered the reports of the Secretary-General. While she also fully understood the importance of the Advisory Committee reviewing the many difficult aspects of peace-keeping operations on the ground and supported its visit to Bosnia, she felt that it was not the most suitable time for the visit in terms of the work of the Fifth Committee. The Advisory Committee had a number of items outstanding, including its report on UNPROFOR, which had not yet been issued and which involved very large sums of money - $1.5 billion. For all those reasons, she proposed that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee should consider the possibility of remaining in New York not only in order to submit that report and others which were outstanding, but also in order to assist the Fifth Committee in its deliberations.

26. Miss INCERA (Costa Rica) said that her delegation had always taken a great interest in all questions relating to human rights and therefore wished to support the allocation of resources for the High Commissioner in order to enable him to discharge his functions without further delay.

27. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) agreed with previous speakers on the need to ensure that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was sufficiently staffed. Her delegation would have preferred to have had the staffing decided in December and therefore believed that a decision must be taken on it.

28. Mr. CONNOR (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management), referring to the proposed reorganization of the Department of Administration and Management, said that he had taken note of the Advisory Committee's observations on the redeployment of the assistant secretary-general post and agreed that the three assistant secretary-general posts should be retained. The debate on the final staffing table of the Office for Inspections and Investigations could be postponed until a later date.

29. As for the reorganization plan itself, the time had come to take action. The current plan was satisfactory because it focused on the services requested by Member States and addressed all the concerns expressed. He therefore requested Member States to give it the necessary support.

30. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Secretary-General was authorized to enter into commitments in respect of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights until the end of 1994, and that the Advisory Committee would await an indication from the Secretariat of whether additional resources were necessary.

31. While he was aware of the need for the Chairman of the Advisory Committee to be present during the debate in the Fifth Committee, it was not always possible owing to the heavy volume of work. While the Advisory Committee would need to consider the problem, he assured the members of the Fifth Committee that he would be in New York, at their disposal, during the July resumed session of the Fifth Committee.

32. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), referring to the resources allocated to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that when the post had been established, it had been made clear that the High Commissioner could draw on the resources of the Centre for Human Rights in order to fulfil his tasks and that additional resources would be necessary. For that reason, the General Assembly had authorized the Secretary-General, on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, to enter into commitments not to exceed $1,471,400 and had decided that such additional appropriation as might be necessary and not to exceed that amount would be considered during the resumed forty-eighth session, as indicated in paragraph 2 of document A/C.5/48/77. Perhaps the only difficulty lay in the establishment of posts, since, until such time as a decision was taken on the additional appropriation, the posts would be temporary.

33. As for the establishment of the Liaison Office in New York, referred to in paragraph 9 of document A/48/7/Add.10, that was the specific designation used by the General Assembly in paragraph 6 of its resolution 48/141, in which it decided that the Office of the High Commissioner should have a liaison office in New York. The description of its functions clearly stated that the Liaison Office would represent the High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights at Headquarters and coordinate their activities in New York. Thus, there should be no duplication whatsoever of functions or resources.

34. As for the question of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, as explained in paragraphs 2 and 3 of document A/C.5/48/81, the appointment had been deferred for reasons which had had nothing to do with the United Nations. Once the Secretary-General had taken his decision, all the concerned parties had welcomed it. As indicated in paragraph 6 of his report, the Secretary-General considered that the function should be performed at the under-secretary-general level. The General Assembly and the Advisory Committee had accepted that proposal, the financial implications of which would amount to $18,600. Since the appointment had been delayed, that amount would be charged against the $1.4 million authorized by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/228 B of 5 April 1994.

35. Mr. ZEVELAKIS (Greece), speaking on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the fact that the establishment of the Liaison Office in New York would not result in duplication of either activities or resources. In December, after authorizing the Secretary-General to enter into commitments, the General Assembly had specified that, at its resumed forty-eighth session, it would consider such additional appropriation as might be necessary and did not exceed the authorized limit. Accordingly, the necessary measures would have to be taken at the earliest possible date in order to allocate the resources required to cover the commitments authorized, so that the Office of the High Commissioner could recruit the long-term staff necessary for its smooth functioning.

36. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that the decision to establish the post of Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories at the under-secretary-general level had been taken without consultation with the Fifth Committee. The Secretary-General took such decisions as he saw fit and, at

(Mr. Michalski, United States)

best, merely informed the Committee of those decisions. The task of the Organization was not to serve the interests of the Secretary-General or those of the Secretariat but rather those of the international community, and it was for Member States to decide how its resources should be administered. His delegation was deeply concerned by the turn which the Organization was taking and by the fait-accompli approach which reduced the role of the Fifth Committee to that of a mere rubber stamp.

37. After an exchange of views in which Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) and Mr. KUMAMARU (Japan) participated, the CHAIRMAN said that informal consultations would be held on the proposed reclassification of posts, on the staffing and functions of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the Centre for Human Rights, on the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, on the continued United Nations human rights presence in Cambodia and on the reorganization of the Department of Administration and Management.

AGENDA ITEM 138: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

(a) FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued) (A/48/470/Add.1 and A/48/955)

38. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the support account for peace-keeping operations (A/48/955), said that the report had been issued under severe time constraints and that some corrections were necessary: paragraph 48 should refer to 14 other posts and not 15 other posts. In annex II, the reference to (Engineering Section), Paragraph reference 41, Requested 1 P-4, Recommended by ACABQ 1 GS, should read: Recommended by ACABQ 1 P-4. Also in annex II, the reference to (Transport Section), Reference paragraph 42, Requested 1 P-3, Recommended by ACABQ 1 P-3, should read: Requested 2 P-3, Recommended by ACABQ 2 P-3.

39. The Advisory Committee report did not indicate the amount recommended for the support account for the period 1 July to 31 December 1994 since, owing to time constraints, the Secretariat had been unable to submit the costs of its recommendations. He thus asked for the programme budget implications to be made available to the Fifth Committee.

40. The aim of the support account was to rationalize the financing of overload posts at Headquarters. Those posts, then numbering 92, had been charged to each of the five peace-keeping operations, a procedure which posed difficulties for the Secretariat since it lacked the necessary flexibility. Since 1990 financing of an amount equal to 8.5 per cent of the cost of the civilian component, including travel, of each peace-keeping operation had been financed from the support account. After having reviewed other possible financing options, the Secretary-General had concluded that the current procedure, which was simpler and had not led to excessive allocations of resources, should be maintained, although it could be improved by the adoption of an annual budget. The Advisory

(Mr. Mselle)

Committee had expressed reservations regarding the application to each operation of an across-the-board percentage of 8.5 per cent regardless of its support requirements at Headquarters. Nevertheless in general it agreed that, until a better alternative was devised, the current mechanism should be retained. With respect to the unencumbered balances in the account, ACABQ accepted the explanation that that was the result of problems relating to recruitment and the time-frame for the use of authorized amounts.

41. The Advisory Committee had various reservations with regard to the Secretary-General's proposals. In his report the Secretary-General was attempting to provide a clear definition of the posts and other services to be funded from the support account and the regular budget. The Secretary-General was seeking to respond to the issues raised by describing the duties and workload of Secretariat units and departments, but had not indicated the extent to which the regular budget supported peace-keeping operations. While the proposal to establish a "main nucleus" of permanent and flexible posts seemed appropriate at first sight, it was not clear whether all or some of the permanent posts would be funded under the regular budget, even where the functions involved were such that it did not seem appropriate to do so, or what threshold would be used to establish the "main nucleus" of permanent posts. The Advisory Committee trusted that its remarks would be taken in a constructive spirit as an attempt to resolve the issues considered in the report of the Secretary-General. The most practical method of proceeding was to define the functions to be discharged, not the functions of departments, in view of which ACABQ was recommending once again that an effort should be made to clarify fully the justification for and scope and financing of support for peace-keeping operations.

42. The Advisory Committee had raised several questions: whether a post for coordination, research, political analysis, training or management should be financed from the support account or the regular budget; why such activities should be funded under the regular budget if they were a direct consequence of the establishment of a peace-keeping operation; and whether such posts should be maintained once operations had ended. In paragraph 22 of its report the Advisory Committee indicated the procedures currently applied in respect of the regular budget. Peace-keeping operations were financed in accordance with a special scale, which caused some of the theoretical problems relating to the role of the support account and of the regular budget in the financing of peace-keeping operations. It should not be thought that the regular budget did not provide support for peace-keeping operations. In that connection the Secretariat must provide the necessary information to delegations. While Headquarters support was currently under examination, most support for peace-keeping operations was provided in the field and was financed from the budget for each operation. The total expenditure planned for 1994 in connection with the support account was some $34.8 million, a figure which represented barely 1.2 per cent of the current annual cost of peace-keeping operations.

43. With reference to the staffing resources to be charged to the support account over the following six months, the Secretary-General was requesting 92

posts in addition to those already authorized by the General Assembly, while the Advisory Committee was recommending authorization of 60 posts.

44. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the support account for peace-keeping operations (A/48/470/Add.1). In his previous report on that subject (A/48/470), the Secretary-General had outlined the resource requirements for the whole year 1994. However, the General Assembly had subsequently requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the resource requirements for the six-month period from 1 January to 30 June 1994 and, in particular, to submit concrete proposals and a rationale for the scope and use of the support account, as well as for the scope and use of the regular budget for financing backstopping activities of peace-keeping operations, and to indicate the criteria for distinguishing between the backstopping of peace-keeping operations and other activities.

45. The report of the Secretary-General (A/48/470/Add.1) had been prepared in response to that request, with the participation of the heads of the departments concerned, who had carefully considered and agreed to all the proposals contained therein. In determining the scope of the support account and of the regular budget, which, in fact, already provided for substantial support to peace-keeping activities in many areas, three categories of Secretariat offices related to peace-keeping operations had been identified (A/48/470/Add.1, para. 21). The first category included offices that had direct responsibilities exclusively for peace-keeping activities; the second category included offices that had direct but not exclusive responsibilities for backstopping peace-keeping operations; and the third category included other additional activities. The criteria for requesting posts in each category must be established. Paragraphs 28 and 29 of the report were also very important; they stated that, in view of the fact that the maintenance of peace and security was a fundamental responsibility of the United Nations, the costs related thereto were to be borne by Member States. Moreover, as it was expected that a number of missions would have to be extended, the Secretariat must have a permanent infrastructure for undertaking peace-keeping operations. The Secretary-General also indicated that the main nucleus of posts that would be required on a permanent basis for Secretariat units with responsibilities exclusively for peace-keeping operations, irrespective of the fluctuations in the number of field missions, should be funded from the regular budget and would be built up gradually within future programme budgets, starting with the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997.

46. In addition to the 342 posts already authorized, the Secretary-General was requesting a further 92 posts, although, in view of the expansion of peace-keeping operations in the past two or three years, it was estimated that, in fact, 630 posts would be needed for backstopping activities. Pending the adoption of further decisions in respect of the final six months of 1994, he took it that the current provisions would be maintained.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.